

# Philosophy as Anarchism

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Originally, philosophy is not a purely theoretical discipline consisting of a set of abstract doctrines and systems detached from human experience. It is, above all, a way of life—that is, a practice that engages the full range of human effort, not only to *understand* but also to *transform* the world and one's own existence. Thought and practice are inseparable in this context: philosophizing does not consist merely in developing arguments or theories, but in adopting a certain way of life. The knowledge produced by philosophy is therefore not an end in itself, but a means to attain wisdom. Thus, philosophy fundamentally defines itself as an art of living.

Yet the wisdom (σοφία) that philosophy (φιλοσοφία) seeks—or rather, loves (φιλο)—cannot be transmitted or taught as theoretical knowledge: it can only be acquired through our own experiences and the very practice of life. While others may guide, orient or provoke reflection, wisdom cannot be expressed or communicated through words; it can only be directly experienced by oneself. No authority can therefore deliver the truth to the individual, whether religious dogmas, political ideologies, or even grand philosophical systems. The individual must conquer it for themselves through the use of their own reason and the trials of their own existence. It is, moreover, precisely this requirement that forms the foundation of the Enlightenment ideal, summed up by the motto *Sapere aude!*: “dare to think for yourself!” (Kant, 1784/1996). The truth sought by philosophy does not, then, lie in adherence to external doctrines, but in a reflective and

existential process unique to each individual: no one can live or understand in another's place. Consequently, philosophy represents a personal quest, one that is well illustrated in the journey of Siddhartha, the protagonist of Hermann Hesse's eponymous novel (Hesse, 1922/1981). Leaving behind his predetermined life as a Brahmin, he leaves his family to embark on a journey during which he will lead, in turn, an ascetic life, and then a worldly and materialistic one, before attaining enlightenment. Throughout his odyssey, Siddhartha remains convinced that he will find the ultimate truth in no one but himself, even rejecting the teachings of Buddha.

In this sense, philosophy, as a practice, is essentially *anarchist*. It implies emancipation from all forms of authoritarianism and coercion. The philosopher is an anarchist in that they reject any imposed truth: for them, truth can arise only from lived experience and the autonomous exercise of reason. As a free individual, they reject all masters, whether religious, ideological, moral, intellectual, economic, or political: neither the State, nor Capital, nor God, nor even the ego exercises dominion over them. To philosophize is to break with all dogma and free oneself from the intellectual tutelage of others, finally daring to think for oneself. It is choosing a life free from all submission: without gods or masters before whom to bow; without bosses for whom to be exploited and alienated; without laws that disguise injustice as order; without beliefs or prejudices that shackle the mind and keep it in heteronomy.

This freedom is, moreover, the very precondition for progress: it is in the rejection of dogmatic constraints, in *disobedience*, that thought becomes creative, that knowledge advances, and that human life can truly flourish. No genuine advancement—whether social, intellectual, or scientific—arises without liberation from established norms and rules. For example, as Paul Feyerabend, a theorist of epistemological anarchism, demonstrates in *Against Method*, the progress of scientific knowledge has historically been achieved through the transgression of established methods rather than through their strict application (Feyerabend, 1975).

Thus, anarchism is not merely the absence of *political* coercive authority. It denotes the absence of *all* forms of coercive authority—moral, ideological, intellectual, or spiritual. Anarchism is therefore not merely a political doctrine: it constitutes a way of life in its own right, a philosophy in the original, ancient sense of the term, that is, a practice of transforming oneself and the world (see also Reclus, 1884). In this sense, it is revolutionary.

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